



ALABAMA PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Phase I: Class Competitions (August-September)

High Schools in Alabama are invited to participate in the Poetry Out Loud National Recitation Contest. A school that agrees to participate should include at least 10 separate classes of students (usually 20-30 students in a class). These classes may be in any field of study, but most often are from English, Theatre and Forensic classes. Teachers are asked to make the process a required part of their course. Extracurricular participation is accepted only as a last resort.

Each class receives materials supplied by NEA and the National Poetry Foundation. Materials include one teachers guide, two Poetry Out Loud Anthologies, two Poetry Out Loud CD's, and two Poetry Out Loud posters. ASCA will also provide one instructional DVD for each school participating.

Following the instructions in the Teacher's Guide, every student in each class participating selects one poem from the anthology or from the Poetry Out Loud website at www.poetryoutloud.org. It is recommended that the student research the poet, and analyses of the poem (poet bios are available on the website). Each student memorizes the selected poem and recites it in a class competition, taking into consideration the discoveries learned through research. Class competitions are evaluated according to the criteria in the Teacher's Guide. The teacher may judge the winner, or elect to assign the class to select a winner.

Phase II: School Competitions (October)

The winners from each class move forward to a school-wide competition. Each student recites two poems for the school wide competition. We request that school-wide competitions are held at a location and time that may be attended by the entire student body, to maximize the exposure of the program and the pride of the students involved. School-wide competitions should be judged by impartial outside judges. Each school receives \$75 to cover the cost of a \$25 honorarium for each of three outside judges. The schools will need to find an accuracy judge and a prompter as well. These could be volunteer staff from the school, since their evaluation is objective. One student is identified as the winner from each participating school and those winners are then prepared to participate in the Regional Semi-Finals. Teachers should support these students through the rest of the competition process.

Phase III: Regional Competitions (November-December)

Each Regional Coordinator will invite school winners, their teachers, and the school coordinator to attend *Finding Your Voice*, a four-hour intensive poetry workshop. This workshop is designed to prepare students for the Regional, State and National competitions. This workshop will take place in November.

Each Region will hold the Regional Semi-Finals in Mid-December. This is a full day event. At the regional level each student is required to select three poems from the Poetry Out Loud anthology to recite. One of these poems must pre-date the 20th century, and one must be less than 15 lines in length. In addition to the poems from the anthology, each student is required to write an original poem to recite in the *Original Poetry Competition*. All poems must be memorized. The top three winners from both the *National Poetry Out Loud* competition and the *Original Poetry* competition will move forward to the State Finals. Winners will be invited to attend an intensive coaching session in January to prepare them for the State Finals.

Phase IV: State Competition (February 28, 2009)

The State Finals will be a full day event, similar to the Regional Finals, except that the students participating in the National competition may not be the same students that compete in the Original Poetry competition. Students competing with memorized poems from the anthology will have an opportunity to compete for the role of State Champion. The *State Champion* and a designated chaperone will travel to Washington D.C. to compete in the National Finals. The top student wins \$200. The school of the winning student will receive \$500 for the library. The first runner up receives \$100, and the school receives \$200 for the library. The winner of the Original Poetry competition wins a state award, but does not progress to Washington D.C. as this is a state competition only.

Phase V: National Competition (April 25-27, 2009)

A total of \$50,000 is awarded in scholarships during the National competition. The National Champion receives a \$20,000 scholarship and finalists receive \$5000 & \$1000 scholarships.